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SUBJECT: AMIR MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT MUBARAK

FOCUSSES ON MEPP

Classified By: Political Counselor Pete O'Donohue for reasons 1.4 b and d

**¶1.** (U) Local media briefly noted a December 23 visit to Kuwait by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, the highlight of which was a meeting with Amir Shaykh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, Crown Prince Shaykh Nawaf Al Sabah, and First Deputy PM and Minister of Defense Shaykh Jaber Al Sabah. Mubarak was accompanied by Egyptian FM Ahmad Abul Gheit, Information Minister Anas El-Feki, Minister of Investment Mahmoud Mohieddin, and Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, among others. While providing little detail, official KUNA press agency accounts noted that the focus of the visit was on bilateral relations, the Middle East peace process, Gulf security, and the Iranian nuclear issue; reports also noted that the visit was part of a tour of Gulf states by Mubarak that included the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

**¶2.** (C) Efforts to obtain further detail about the visit from MFA working-level contacts were non-productive, with a Counselor in MFA's Arab World Department lamenting to POLCouns that the Amiri diwan rarely provides a read-out of meetings with heads of state that filters down to his level and that, as a consequence, MFA staffers had no information about the meeting. (Note: the MFA contact was similarly unable to provide any insight into an ongoing December 27-28 visit by Omani Sultan Qaboos. End Note.) By contrast, Egyptian Embassy Political Counselor Khaled Hassan confirmed to POLCouns on December 27 that the meeting with the GOK was "productive, useful, and much appreciated by the Amir" and focused on ways to move the MEPP forward in the face of perceived Israeli intransigence on the settlements issue and continued disputes between the Palestinian factions, "which encourages Israel to continue to stall." Egypt is working hard, Hassan said, to put pressure on the Palestinian leaders to resolve their differences. Hassan noted that the Egyptian delegation had conveyed that Egypt is trying to encourage the Israelis to be more receptive to efforts to revive the MEPP and to undertake "humane measures" that could improve the atmosphere; he said the Amir had expressed "understanding and appreciation" for the Egyptian role. Hassan noted that Egypt is prepared to send its FM and Intelligence Chief -- both of whom were part of the visiting delegation -- to Washington in the near future to consult on how best to move forward on these issues.

**¶3.** (C) Hassan told POLCouns that, in addition to the MEPP, talks also touched on common concerns over Iran, the situation in Yemen, and the desire for expanded mutual investment opportunities. Hassan noted that Kuwait is a leading Arab investor in Egypt and Egypt seeks to expand its business activity in Kuwait, to include projects to build a hospital and a number of bridges.

**¶4.** (C) Comment: We defer to Embassy Cairo, but Mubarak's published itinerary is also interesting because of the GCC capitals he chose not to visit, perhaps because of the

divisions amongst GCC members regarding his Palestinian reconciliation efforts. End Comment.

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